2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

MWANDISI: The sausages of porridge stuck in the ground and sprinkled with powdered medicine which each stoops and bites mean that you should be heavy in your belly (*musito munda*) and not have diarrhœa, it is to make faeces hard (not watery). Some we leave and bury [the end of each sausage of porridge is left in the ground]; that means that people should step over it and take away the disease, may they have diarrhœa at their homes! They will get it really!

QUESTION: Why do the dead man's sisters admonish their sisters-in-law, his widows?

MWANDISI: Because we have all met together. They say: 'Do not grudge him food, go on cooking for him. He dies of hunger! Begin again! And why do you not cook for us when we come? You grudge us food!' We scold them very much and they weep tears.

QUESTION: They say in Selya that you both drive away a shade and bring him back to the house.

MWANDISI: No, we drive him away, we do not bring him back to the house.

QUESTION: But you go to the stream with a stem of bananas, a hen and a fresh strip of bark, the bananas you throw away, but you come back with the hen and the bark. Is that the shade?

MWANDISI: These do not come back home. The officiant has them and takes them to her house. . . .

The stem of bananas we throw in the stream, it is sickness, it is the corpse, it goes to Kyala there. The hen and the bark we give to the doctor, the officiant, because it is she who caught hold of the sickness. She is always an unrelated person, not a relative; we pay her. If we have not performed the ritual we run mad, the shades have not come out, they are still there within.

QUESTION: You performed the ritual for Lubabelo's child yourselves?

MWANDISI: Yes, she was our grandchild. We grandparents don't matter, we carry out the ritual but it's not important; if, however, it is our own child [who has died] then it is taboo. It is taboo up to the point that connections are not relatives. [A grandchild in this context—though not in other contexts—is treated as not a relative]. The ritual *must* be performed for all *relatives* (*abakamu*). . . .

First the stem of bananas and then the millet and pumpkin-seeds are passed between the straddled legs of the principals. The winnowing basket (containing millet and seeds) is pushed along with the officiant's elbow. In performing this ritual we finish the mating of man and woman, for that which comes out of the man in front [i.e. the semen] is the shades, when the participants have spat out we drive the shades away. If we have not performed the ritual we go mad. The shades have not come out but are still within. When, however, we have finished, then they have come out of the body. But they come again, we always have them. (*Apa tukunyagula tukumaleya mboleli munyambala nankikulu, po*

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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845 and the statement cannot be altogether devoid of
783 truth. The influence of the mind upon the body is universally admitted: may it not be that the consciousness of guilt has the effect of contracting the muscles, and the relaxation which follows confession renders birth less painful? And may it not be that even a false confession, wrung from a despairing sufferer, brings a momentary relief sufficient to bring the child to the birth? One is glad to add, however, that many women have the courage to refuse altogether to submit to this shameful ordeal, insisting that their trouble is due, not to the wrath of the spirits, but to other causes, and that they will die rather than confess what is not true.

844 When birth has taken place, the cord is cut with a
846 bamboo knife, and the placenta buried in the family place of prayer, a small part protruding to leave a connection which insures further children. All this time no one in the house may swallow saliva. The father calls out to know the sex of the child, but he must not yet enter (for the party have entered the house as soon as possible after the birth). After a few days the mother is anointed with oil and shaved, along with her child, and powdered with medicine. Meantime intimation has been sent to the grandparents; a cock if a boy, a hen if a girl, telling them all that they wish to know. The mother may now resume her household duties.

851 But in about a week she goes to show the child to
603 her own parents, and at the end of her visit, which
431 lasts some weeks, great preparations are made by both

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sets of grandparents. The mother sets out from her father's house with a train of friends carrying food, and a very special friend who carries the baby. Arrived at the paternal grandfather's, the food is laid down, and the child is taken by the grandfather, who presents a hoe to the maternal grandmother; and then, with the child in his arms, goes to the *ikiyinja* (the family place of prayer). He spits into the palm of his hand, and, laying it in blessing upon the child's head, he prays:

> "May it be well with you, my child. Ye spirits, be not surprised at this child of yours whom I present to you. I am old: let him take my place. Care for him in this world of sickness. I was alone, and ye have multiplied me and made me a company. Be not angry, but bless the child; and in the sight of God let him be acceptable."

The mother sits with head covered, for she must not be seen by her father-in-law. The parties now exchange gifts of food, and eat separately, after which the grandfather gives the child a gift, usually now a small coin, over which the little hand is closed. Next, the grandmother takes the infant and hands it to its mother, who, with a pot of beer on her head, goes off with her husband to their home. Arrived there, but not till then, the father takes the child in his arms, and thanks it for the gift it has brought, a foretoken of more yet to be earned.

Lingering here and there in certain families are strange customs, probably belated survivals from